



Rock Talk

The Official Newsletter of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds

ATTENTION ALL WITHLACOOCHEE ROCKHOUNDS MEMBERS!

Our upcoming December meeting is a very important one.

This will be our Annual election of Officers and Directors. These are the people that will plan and facilitate the future of our club.

The officers have continual duties to perform, and the Directors work together with the Officers to decide what changes to make, what policies to enforce, and how best to direct the path of our club and ensure it's success.

The Officers and Directors accept ideas and suggestions from club members for improvements to our club.

These are then researched, brought before the Directors at a Board meeting and discussed at length.

If a decision is reached, the idea will be voted upon and if passed, it will be implemented.

This is the process by which the Withlacoochee Rockhounds club has been directed since its inception.

It is very important for members to have a say in who will run their club for and with them.

If you have a desire to serve our club and wish to be added to the election ballot, please call the Secretary to inform her of your intentions.

If you do choose to be considered for a position, please do it with sincerity and a willingness to work with your fellow Board members for a better organization.

Please remember, you must be a paid member of our club to cast your vote. Membership will be checked before you are handed a ballot.

You don't have a voice if you don't vote!

This Month's Roundup of Stories

- [Elections](#)
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Our 48th Annual Gem and Mineral Show

The 48th Annual Withlacoochee Rockhounds Gem and Mineral Show was a great success once again.

Thank you to all club members who volunteered.

Thank you to all our club members who were vendors.

Thank you to all of our non-member vendors.

Thank you to everyone who attended.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

We're already planning for next year!



Secretary's Report

Minutes and More from Club Secretary - Melodye Steverson

Withlacoochee Rockhounds Monthly Meeting - Minutes Date 11/8/2023

The meeting was called to order by President Judith Birx at 7:05pm.

We all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

There were no new members to recognize.

There were no guests in attendance.

There was no meeting held in October so there were no minutes reported in the newsletter.

Treasurer Janet Wheeler gave no Treasurer's report.

President Birx began with announcements:

All information regarding our application for reinstatement as a non-profit organization has been turned over to the CPA, who turned it over to the IRS. We are now waiting for the result.

Anthony Maffatone, one of our William Holland School scholarship winners for 2023 stood and gave a report about the class he took and how much fun he had at the school. He recommended that all members attend WHS if ever they get a chance. Our other 2023 scholarship recipient Lex Kollias, reported that he will be attending WHS next year for a course on casting.

President Birx reminded all the members that we will be having our annual election of officers and board members at the December meeting and encouraged all members to consider serving the club by offering their services as members of the board. She asked everyone to make sure to come to the election and vote as we have one open board member position.

President Birx also reminded all members that we need more volunteers to sign up to work at the Gem Show to make it a success.

She also mentioned that membership dues must be paid by the end of this year for the 2024 year.

SFMS is having a rock swap in March in Live Oak, Florida.

All club members are invited to rent a space or a table to sell whatever rock-related items they would like to sell.

Lauren Bell gave a "field trip" report: Graves Mountain mine was open in October and they are also having a "magma dig" on January 6 th , 2024.

Michael Steverson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Carla Howe seconded, passed by all.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:31 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Steverson.

Withlacoochee Rockhounds Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Date 11-15-23

Attending Board members: Judith Birx, Janice Wocjik, Melodye Steverson, Janet Wheeler, Ralph Barber, Roger Wheeler, Michael Steverson and Leslie Newberry.

Board meeting started at 6:36 pm and was held via the Internet on Zoom.

President Birx began by telling all of the Board members that our club has been reinstated to our 501 (c)3 status. All board members were very happy and agreed with the President that each board member should have a copy of the reinstatement for their records.

President Birx informed the Board that long-time Board member Roberta Oldread had resigned from the Board. President Birx suggested that we offer the Board position to member Anthony Maffatone. Anthony has already been approached to shadow Ralph Barber at the Gem Show to learn how to facilitate the Gem Show for 2024. President Birx stressed that our Club needs to have younger members learning to take charge and keep the Club running in years to come.

Continued on page 9

Petoskey Stone

Petoskey Stone is a type of fossilized coral that holds significance and popularity, particularly in the state of Michigan, USA.

Petoskey Stone is a fossilized coral, specifically a type of colonial coral known as *Hexagonaria percarinata*. The stone gets its name from the city of Petoskey in Michigan, where it is commonly found.

Petoskey Stones are characterized by a unique pattern of hexagonal shapes on their surface. These hexagon-shaped fossilized coral polyps create a distinctive “honeycomb” or “starburst” .

The stone is composed of the fossilized remains of ancient coral creatures, and it is primarily made of calcium carbonate. Over time, the coral skeletons were replaced by minerals, resulting in the preservation of the hexagonal pattern.

Petoskey Stones are estimated to be around 350 million years old, dating back to the Devonian period. They offer a glimpse into the ancient geological history of the Great Lakes region.

Petoskey Stones are estimated to be around 350 million years old, dating back to the Devonian period. They offer a glimpse into the ancient geological history of the Great Lakes region.

The popularity of Petoskey Stones contributes to tourism in the Great Lakes region, particularly in Michigan. Tourists are drawn to the shores of Lake Michigan for the opportunity to find and collect these distinctive fossils.

Petoskey Stones have become a symbol of Michigan, and various souvenirs and merchandise featuring these stones are widely available. This includes everything from jewelry and home decor to shirts and accessories.

Artists and craftsmen use Petoskey Stones as raw materials for creating unique and visually appealing pieces. The stone’s natural beauty and historical significance make it a popular choice in various creative projects.

In summary, Petoskey Stone is more than just a fossilized coral; it’s a symbol of Michigan’s geological history and a cherished item for collectors, artisans, and those who appreciate its unique beauty.

Read the entire article at [GeologyScience.com](https://www.GeologyScience.com)





Introduction to Crystals

At the Withlacoochee Rockhounds Meeting
Wednesday, December 13, 2023,
Board Member Leslie Newberry will present
a Beginners Guide to Crystals .

What are the properties of Crystals?
What are the most popular Crystals?
How have they been used in the past?
What are the holistic uses of Crystals.
Everything you want to know and More!



Clubhouse Address:
3357 Susan Dr.
Spring Hill, FL 34606

Seraphinite

Seraphinite is a form of clinocllore, a member of the chlorite group. It is only found in the Lake Baikal region of eastern Siberia. Seraphinite acquired its name after Seraphim, the biblical highest order of angels, because of its shimmery, feather-like appearance.

Although seraphinite is getting rather scarce to find, it is still available for sale at shows and online. Most of the time you can easily see what you're getting, as the patterns will be quite visible on the outside. If you are looking for certain patterns and a higher grade, buying pre-cut slabs is the way to go. If you have never cut seraphinite before, know there are some pitfalls with this material. It's soft and can easily break in the trimming or cabbing process. It also has varying hardnesses, so it can tend to undercut, as well as easily chip on the edges.

When getting started on cutting slabs, there is a general direction to cut. Most of the time you will see radial or partial radial sprays at the bottom portion of the stone. That will give you a grasp of what is top and bottom, so you can cut north to south for your slabs. This will yield the best chatoyant patterns in the stone. I would also suggest cutting your slabs a slight bit thicker than the average stone because of its softness.

This gives you greater odds against it breaking in the cabbing process. Once your slabs are cut, many times you will get two predominant patterns for design. The top portion usually has smaller feather patterns that are tight together. The bottom portion will give you more radial sprays and longer feathery designs.

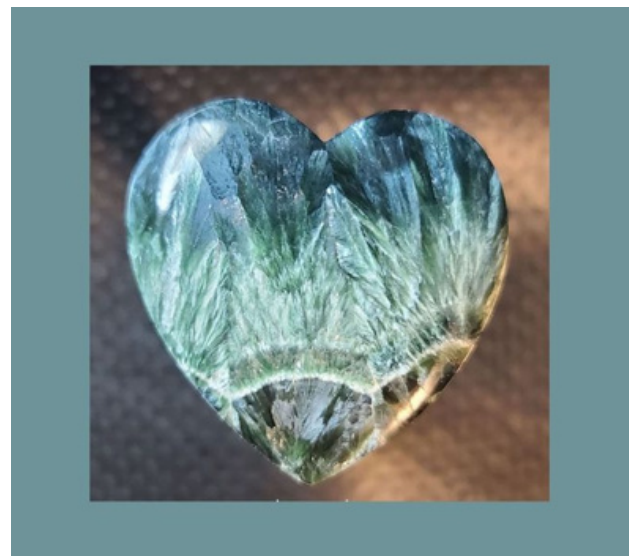
Both sections are great to design cabs with but remember that the solid green areas are harder than the mica inclusions, and will tend to undercut. The lighter the color, the softer that portion.

Once your preforms are trimmed out and you are ready to cab, I would suggest a different routine than cabbing agates or jaspers. I like to start on a worn 80-grit steel wheel, or a 140-grit soft resin, as this material tends to grind away super easily and quickly. Use a soft touch to shape your outside design, then move to a 140-grit or even the 280-grit soft resin wheel to dome the top and clean up your edges and girdle on the cab.

Remember, the lighter the color, the softer it is, so beware when trying to cab thin cabs or long pointy cabs, it can break easily!

Once you have completed shaping and doming the cab on the 280-grit wheel, stop and dry it off thoroughly and be sure you have removed all the scratches by this point. With the mica inclusions running in a certain direction, you will easily see if there are any scratches, as they will stand out going against the feathery sprays.

Read the entire article at RockNGem.com



Gold Sheen Obsidian

Gold Sheen Obsidian is a type of volcanic glass that exhibits a stunning golden or metallic sheen on its surface. It is a variety of obsidian, which is a naturally occurring volcanic glass formed during the rapid cooling of lava.

The distinctive golden sheen in Gold Sheen Obsidian is caused by the presence of microscopic crystals of minerals such as magnetite or hematite within the glass.

The distinctive golden sheen in Gold Sheen Obsidian is attributed to the presence of microscopic mineral inclusions within the glass. The most common minerals responsible for the sheen are magnetite and hematite. These tiny crystals align themselves within the glass, creating the reflective and metallic appearance.

Obsidian is found in areas with recent or ongoing volcanic activity. Deposits can be discovered near volcanic flows or in regions with a history of volcanic eruptions.

Throughout history, obsidian has been used by various cultures for tools, weapons, and ornaments due to its sharp edges when fractured. Gold Sheen Obsidian, with its unique appearance, may have been particularly valued for decorative and ritualistic purposes.

Gold Sheen Obsidian is found in regions with volcanic activity where the conditions for the rapid cooling of lava are met.

Here are some notable locations where Gold Sheen Obsidian can be mined:

1. **Mexico:** Mexico is a significant source of Gold Sheen Obsidian.
2. **United States:** States like Oregon, California, and Arizona have deposits of obsidian, including varieties with a golden sheen.
3. **Other Volcanic Regions:** It may also be found in other volcanic regions around the world where conditions for the formation of obsidian are present. These areas include parts of Central and South America, as well as other regions with a history of volcanic activity.

Read the entire article at [GeologyScience.com](https://www.geology-science.com)



Field Trips

"Note: The Withlacochee Rockhounds Club does not sponsor field trips other than trips that are sanctioned by the SFMS (The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies).

Our club insurance is through SFMS and does not cover excursions not listed on their website as safe."

Black Pirate Sea Glass

Sea glass colors are varied and plentiful. Sometimes called “mermaid’s tears,” these beach finds, including Lake Michigan beaches, make wonderful souvenirs not only for the naturally tumbled beauty of such pieces but also for the stories they can tell.

For instance, the Finger Lakes region of central New York is known as “wine country” but one of its unexpected collectibles is the lake beach glass, sometimes still faintly bearing the etched lettering of its origin story, found with particular prevalence along the eastern side of Seneca Lake at Lodi Point Beach State Park.

Pirate glass is colloquially described as “black” but the intensity of what is more likely to be blue, brown, green, purple or red glass has been deepened by the addition of cobalt, copper or iron oxides; or during the glass-making process, the addition of iron slag, or coal and wood ash.

Why darken glass? To extend the life of products and their transport because darker glass protects valuable liquids (like alcohol or oil) from degeneration by sunlight.

The same properties added to deepen color also improve the structural integrity of the glass and make it less likely to break during handling and storage.

At sea, water may turn too contaminated to drink, but not ale or rum. Or a seafaring elixir of lime, sugar and rum often kept aboard in dark bottles as a survivalist measure against scurvy.

The strong, dark glass was perfect, beachcombing blogger Kirsti Scott notes, “For pirates on seafaring ships!”

Pirate glass is noteworthy for its size, for the number of bubbles trapped inside its glass, and for its primitive density that (when held up to light) can reveal a “glow” along the edges of its true dark amber, olive green, or purple color. Older pieces may be so dense and opaque that light will not shine through them.

“Pirate ships were no strangers to the shores of the Outer Banks [of the Carolinas], and neither were their rum bottles. After hundreds of years of these bottles being tossed around by the sometimes extremely violent and vicious waters of Hatteras Island, these black chunks occasionally appear on the shore, to a beachcomber’s delight,” collector Kristin Hissong recounted in 2020 for the *Island Free Press*.

The trick is knowing what you’re looking for because pirate glass, by virtue of its dark color, blends almost too well into a beach’s natural background and can look a lot like any other average black stone.

Read the entire article at RockNGem.com



Board member Leslie Newberry will begin shadowing treasurer Janet Wheeler at the Gem Show to learn how Janet handles the financial portion of the Gem Show.

Leslie will continue to shadow Janet in 2024 to familiarize herself with the duties of the Treasurer.

President Birx had a list of things that were needed for the Gem Show. She stated that we needed wristbands for the attendees.

Secretary Steverson agreed to find and order one thousand wristbands.

President Birx agreed to get the tickets and she will pick up Aaron's breastplate from the storage unit.

The treasurer will bring the cash boxes. No machines will be needed because there will be no room for demonstrations. There will be no display boards needed as there will be no space for them. There was a very long discussion regarding a raffle or raffles, what would be raffled off and how the prizes would be awarded. At the end of the discussion, there was no consensus reached. This decision will be made at the next meeting.

Ralph Barber said that the time for set up at the Gem Show would be 11 AM on Thursday, at which time volunteers will be setting up all the tables.

President Birx brought up the subject of respect for officers and board members, but mainly respect for the President during a meeting. The occurrence of speaking out of turn, making rude comments, and shouting out during a meeting must be brought under control. It is very disrespectful and disruptive and will be addressed at the next meeting.

Secretary Steverson stated that she would write an article regarding this behavior and how behavior should be in a meeting situation to be published in the newsletter before the next meeting, as this behavior can no longer be tolerated.

Secretary Steverson gave a report on the new signs that are being ordered from Sir Speedy. The company gave us a break on the price and we will get the signs we requested for \$400. She will pick them up on November 27 th .

Regarding SFMS: At the last meeting, a member stated that our club was under an umbrella with the SFMS regarding insurance and field trips. This information was incorrect.

President Birx answered this way: "We are not under an umbrella with any organization. We do not answer to the SFMS. They have a lot of good information. They are very nice and helpful people. We do not get insurance when we probably should. We have to pay extra for show insurance through them.

We can get show insurance anywhere. We do want to be part of SFMS, but I want to make sure that everybody here understands: We are our own club. We do not answer to other federations. We are part of SFMS because we want to be, not because we need to be."

The question arose of what the SFMS insurance (which we pay for every member) covers.

Our VP Janice Wocjik answered: "SFMS has field trips that are sanctioned by them. You will be covered at those. Or at the swap meet, you will be covered there. And at their meetings."

The meeting ended at 7:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Steverson

Unakite - State Stone of North Carolina



And, in keeping with the season, it's red and green!

Unakite is a type of metamorphic rock that is primarily composed of pink orthoclase feldspar, green epidote, and clear to bluish-gray quartz.

It is known for its distinctive mottled appearance, with a combination of pink, green, and sometimes white or clear mineral components.

The name "Unakite" is derived from the Unaka Mountains in the southeastern United States, where this rock was first discovered.

Unakite is a metamorphic rock that forms through the alteration of granite.

The original minerals in the granite undergo metamorphic processes, such as recrystallization and mineral reactions, resulting in the unique combination of pink orthoclase feldspar, green epidote, and clear to bluish-gray quartz that characterizes Unakite.

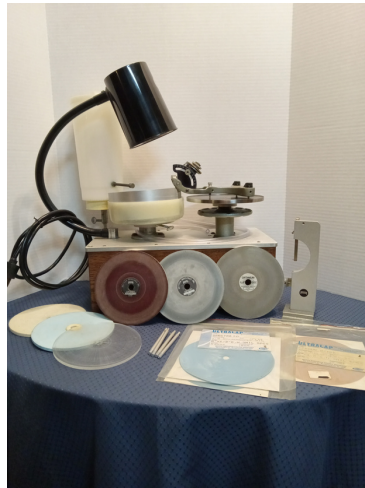
Unakite was first discovered in the Unaka Mountains of North Carolina, USA, from which it derives its name.

Read the entire article at [GeologyScience.com](https://www.geology-science.com)

Some items for sale by club members.
All items are local pick up only. No shipping.



Melodye has a new, in-box
Hi-Tech 6" rock trim saw
for sale.
\$400
407.760.4472



Melodye has a lovingly
restored RayTech
faceting machine for
sale.
Works great.
\$900
(These normally sell for upwards
of \$3000)
407.760.4472



Michelle has some marble
for sale.
\$25 for all the pieces.

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Our monthly club meeting is held at the
Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Club,
3357 Susan Dr., Spring Hill, FL 34606, on
the 2nd Wednesday of each month
from 7:00 to 9:00 PM



www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com

**Your Business Card Size Ad
in Rock Talk**

The cost for non-club members
to advertise their businesses in
Rock Talk is \$10.00 per month.
Contact Michael Steverson to set up an
ad in both the newsletter and
the club website. It will benefit both
your business and our club.

Advertisers Needed

Please help us find advertisers for the
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use the monthly income. Both the Rock
Talk and our website have more exposure
than only club members

Contact club treasure Janet Wheeler: ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com
or send to:
Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 9634
Spring Hill, FL 34811-6634

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Purpose

We are a non-profit organization whose purpose is to foster interest and promote knowledge of minerals, gems, fossils, lapidary arts, and earth sciences, through regular meetings, informative programs, workshops, and field trips. PLUS, our annual gem, mineral and jewelry show.

Membership is open to anyone sharing such interests.

Dues

Dues are \$35.00 annually for adults, and \$5.00 for children under 18 years of age.

Club Meeting Location and time

Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center, 3357 Susan Dr in Spring Hill. The meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00PM

2023 Club Officers and Appointees

President	Judith Birx	352.587.1702	judithblrx@hotmail.com
Vice President	Janice Wojcik	813.677.6263	jfwojcik@verizon.net
Secretary	Melodye Steverson	352.683.9496	melodye@designsbymelodye.com
Treasurer	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com
Rock Talk Editor	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com
Club Webmaster	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com
Mailing Reporter	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com
Gem Bag Coordinator	Gloria DuPont	352.848.5199	ddupont@tampabay.rr.com
Audio/Visual Coordinator	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Judith Birx (President)	Janice Wojcik (Vice President)	Melodye Steverson (Secretary)	Janet Wheeler (Treasurer)
Roberta Oldread	Leslie Newberry	Roger Wheeler	Michael Steverson
			Ralph Barber (Past President)



Bench Tips from Brad Smith

Brad Smith's *Bench Tips* are a monthly feature of Rock Talk

TEMPLATES

Whenever I have to make more than 2-3 exact copies of a sheet metal component, I think of making a template. Templates let me easily draw the shape of an item to cut out.

Art stores or online sources like cooltools.us/ and kingsleynorth.com/ sell templates for common shapes like circles, ovals, hearts, etc. but for nonstandard shapes, I make my own out of a scrap of sheet plastic or sheet metal. My preference is brass. I carefully lay out the shape using a steel ruler, a set of dividers, a scribe, and a fine center punch.

One example is the brass template in the pic below that let's me quickly trace the design of ginko leaf earrings onto silver sheet. Another is the nickel template which makes it easy to drill a pattern of holes for pin inlay into wooden handles.

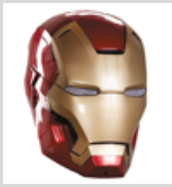


Learn New Skills with Brad's "How To Do It" Books

[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)

Rock Talk Funny Papers





From The Editor

Hello to all Withlacoochee Rockhounds

It is I, your friendly neighborhood editor again.

Cabelot 3.5 was a "rocking" success. EVERYONE had a great time. Much cutting and polishing was done. If you missed it, rest assured, there WILL be a Cabelot 4.

For our December meeting, Leslie Newberry will give a presentation on crystals.

Also, December is the time for our election of club officers and board of directors members. So, be there to cast your vote. Remember, only active, paid members can vote.

With regard to membership, you will see there is a new and improved membership form on the last page of this newsletter. I thought it was time for a change and decided to freshen it up.

If you would like to place a business card ad in the newsletter, please feel free to contact me, and we'll get you added to the next available issue.

Additionally, if any of you have not received your newsletter or are not receiving my e-mail blasts (meetings, rock sales, etc.), *please* check your spam folder. If you are still are not receiving them, please contact me, and let's make sure I have your correct e-mail address. I have a few of you who unsubscribed from the mailings. I cannot add you back to the list. You have to subscribe to get back on the list. It's a permissions thing.

Our Board would like our members to come up with suggestions for programs to be presented at our monthly meetings. What would you like to see? What would you like to learn? What would you like to know? Is there something you'd like to teach or present? You can help our club expand its educational repertoire. We'd love to hear from you all.

Contact any Board member or bring your written suggestions to a meeting.

Rock On!!!

Club Phone Number - 352.587.2714

Warning to Withlacoochee Rockhound Members

During the last several months, illicit requests have been sent to members of various clubs in the US, including the Withlacoochee Rockhounds, asking members to purchase gift cards that would be used as donations to various organizations.

These are SCAMS.


Be advised that our club has never and will never ask members to buy gift cards or provide any form of monetary funds to anyone or any organization by phone call, email, or any other method of communication.

Rockhounds Advertisers

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Judith Bix
Member of Withlacoochee Rockhounds
Judithbix@hotmail.com
Natural Stone Jewelry, Wire Wrapping,
Crystals, Beading

352-587-1702



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Your Business Card Size Ad in Rock Talk

The cost for non-club members to advertise their businesses in
Rock Talk is \$10.00 per month.

Contact Michael Stevenson to set up an ad in both the newsletter and
the club website. It will benefit both
your business and our club.

If your ad has a web address, or Etsy shop address, I have linked to it.

Advertisers Are Needed

Please help us find advertisers for the Rock Talk and our website.
The monthly income from these ads is beneficial to the club.
Both the Rock Talk and our website have more exposure than only club members.
Contact club treasurer Janet Wheeler: ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com or
send to:
Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 5634 Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634



Membership Form – 2024

Withlacoochee Rockhounds
Hernando County FL

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Full Name

Partner's Full Name

* If both applying for membership

Child's Full Name

* If under 18, and applying with parent

Street Address

City

State / ZIP

Phone Number

Email

Annual Membership Dues:

*Choose your type of membership

- Individual Membership \$35.00/ea
- Individual Membership \$35.00/ea
- Under 18 Membership \$5.00/ea
- Under 18 Membership \$5.00/ea

Returning Member?

New Member?

If you are applying, for example, as husband, wife and child (under 18), then fill in full name, partner's name and child's name above. Then, choose two individual memberships to the left, along with an under 18 membership.

Give this completed form, along with your check (made payable to "Withlacoochee Rockhounds") or credit card for dues to Club Secretary Janet Wheeler at a club meeting. Or, you may mail the form to:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box
Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634